

THE

EAST WALPOLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Eleazer Rhodes, Nathaniel Prebble and John Rhoades seek permission to attend devine service in the Walpole Church rather than their own church in Stoughton, as the Walpole Church was nearer.

1734

The following petition was presented to the General Court:--

"To His Excellency Jonathan Belcher, Esq., Captain General and Governor-in-chief, the Honorable, the Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England, in General Court assembled, May 29th 1734:

"The Petition of Eleazer Rhodes, Nathaniel Prebble, and John Rhoades, inhabitants of the Town of Stoughton, humbly sheweth--

"That Whereas, by the Providence of God, who appoints the Bounds of our Habitations, We, your humble Petitioners, live so distant and remote from the meeting house in Stoughton, that it is difficult and impracticable for us and our Families to attend on the Public Worship of God in Stoughton, it being 6 and 7 miles from sd. meeting House to our Houses; also the Way being very bad, which, renders it the more tedious travelling, and inasmuch as we are more convenient and are near to the Town of Walpole, so as that our Lands border upon the line between the Said Towns, and our Houses are within one mile and anhalf, and two miles and an half from the meeting house in Walpole, and also did at the very first of the Setting up of the Publick Worship in Walpole join with the Inhabitants there in Supporting the Gospel, and do continue to congregate and contribute there, and also have been obliged to pay equal Proportions in all the Taxes with the Inhabitants of the Town od Stoughton.

"For these and other Reasons that might be mentioned, Your humble Petitioners therefore pray that you would be pleased to let us off from the Town of Stoughton, and our Lands adjoining to our Home Lots, and lay us to the Town of Walpole. Hoping therefore that you will take the Circumstances of your Petitioners into your wise Consideration, and that you will grant the Prayer of this Petition, Your Petitioners as in Duty bound Shall ever Pray.

Eleazer Rhodes,

For Himself and the other Petit'rs.

"In the House of Representatives, May 31st, 1734. Read and ordered that the Petitioners serve the Town of Stoughton with a copy of the Petition, that they shew cause (if any they have) on Tuesday, the 11th of June next, why the Prayer thereof should not be granted. Sent up for Concurrence.

J. Quincy, Speaker."

"In Council, May 31, 1734. Read and concurred.

Thad's Mason, Dep'y Sec'y."

"Consented to. J. Belcher.

"A true copy,--Attest

Thad's Mason, Dep'y Sec'y."



Elizabeth Cottrell
453 Winter St.
Walpole, MA 02081

A Brief
History of our Church
East Walpole Congregational

The people in East Walpole attended church in Norwood as that was the nearest church. There were no street cars then, and unless one owed a horse and carriage, they had to walk the two miles to church. The nearest church was the Orthodox-Congregational Church, which at that time stood just ~~at the~~ beyond the "subway" nearly opposite Chapel Street. Many of the founders of our church were long time members of that church.

on April 25, 1877

A few Christian men and women met at Mrs. Selancy Smith's house to organize a church. Even before that date, services were occasionally held in town Sunday evenings through the kindness of ministers and laymen from the Norwood Church.

They ~~had~~ engaged the Rev. Charles B. Smith as their first minister. Mr. Smith was a middle aged man. ~~In his earlier days~~ He had earned his way through college, and in his early days as minister, he believed that no man should own another, and because of his abolitionist views had lost many positions in churches. At the time he became our minister, he was chaplain of the Dedham Jail and conducted services there in the morning before coming to preach in East Walpole. In the afternoon he conducted services at ~~the~~ ~~Islington~~ ~~Islington~~. It was a very busy day for a man of his age. He lived in West Medford, and came out Saturday and stayed over at a friend's house in Islington.

From the very beginning this was a Union Church, which included Congregationalists, Baptists, Universalists, Methodists and ~~Episcopalians~~ Episcopalians. It was probably one of the first churches in New England to include all denominations, all were welcome.

On May 5, 1877 another meeting was held at Mrs. Smith's house to consider further the organization of a church. At this meeting Articles of Faith and Covenant were adopted and thus they became a church. Mr. William W. Rhoades was elected at the meeting, the first deacon of the church. An office he held till his death in 1890.

On the first Sunday in May 1877, 12 persons gathered to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Church services were held in the old Ball Room of ~~the~~ what was formerly the David Morse Tavern in East Walpole Square. It was through the kindness of the owner, Hon. Francis W. Bird that the church was given free use of the room. This room was called Bird Hall, but should not be confused with the Bird Hall we know, which was not built until 1884.

At a meeting at Deacon ~~W. W. Rhoades~~ Rhoades' house on June 6, 1882, attended by only seven members, it was "deemed best to build a chapel" Four trustees, and two solicitors were chosen. In October a lot of land was acquired from Dea. Rhoades. Thomas W. Siloway was engaged as architect for the chapel, which was 30' by 50'. Mr. Thomas Corbett took his horse and cart and dug out the cellar.

On May 18, 1883 the new chapel was dedicated. For that day it was a fine chapel, with wall-to-wall carpeting, oil side lights and possibly a center chancelier, walnut pulpit, ~~and~~ pulpit chairs, and communion table. The pews were settees. The only heat in the church came from a parlor stove, the gift of Mr. Leonard Helt of Norwood. A sliding partition separated the vestry from the sanctuary. The windows had stained glass.

From the beginning there was a "Sewing Circle" probably the forerunner of the Ladies Aid, and Woman's Church Aid. Suppers were given in the church occasionally. It must have been very difficult putting on a supper, as

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Church History

there was no kitchen facilities in the building, neither cook-stove, nor running water, or sink. The water had to be brought from the well or a spring on Deacon Rhodes farm, across the street from the church.

Service

For the dedication a reed organ was borrowed from Mr. Nathan Cobb for the service, but shortly after the church bought an organ. A furnace was installed about 1897, and electric lights in 1897. Miss Sarah Pettee, one of the youngest of the Charter Members, gave the church wood from her wood-lot, for the stove and furnace, and Frank Gould came with his sawing machine and cut it up in furnace lengths. Town water was not installed in the church until 1911

One of the staunch workers in the church was the Rev. Edwin Thompson, a retired minister of the Universalist Church in Norwood. He lived in the house on East Street just in back of the Fire Station. He was an abolitionist before the Civil War, and he often lectured on the subject. At one of these lectures Frederick Douglas, a runaway slave, was so impressed that he took up the cause of his race, and became a world famous lecturer for the Freedom of the Slaves. Mr. Thompson's house was one of the underground railway stations, for runaway slaves, heading for Canada and freedom.

In 1896 the street cars were put through from Dedham and went as far as Walnut Avenue in Norwood. They were not allowed to cross the railroad tracks at Winslows, but after the Subway was built under the tracks the line was extended to East Walpole, that was in November of 1897. Before that Mr. Madigan drove a wagon (stage) from East Walpole to Winslows station, to pick up the mail and passengers. One later driver of "The Stage" said he kept a loaded revolver with him to protect himself and the mail.

In 1914 it became apparent that we needed a larger church, so plans were put in progress to raise money for a new church. Land on Rhodes Avenue was given by Mr. Charles Sumner Bird. Plans were obtained from the Boston architect R. Clifton Sturgis. The contract was let out to the Allen Construction Co., of Walpole. On Oct. 19, 1914 the Corner-Stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies, led by our minister Rev. Harry S. Lowd. The church choir took part in this service.

April 18, 1915 was the big day. That was the day the new Church was dedicated. The church was filled to overflowing. Chairs had to be placed in the middle aisle, and chairs placed in the two reception and coat room on either side of the narthex. Sarah E. Pettee died in April 1916, the last of our Charter members.

New Europe was at war, and soon we were drawn into it. The Rev. Lowd resigned as minister in August of 1918 to do Y.M.C.A. work abroad during the World War I. Many of our young men volunteered for service in the U.S. Army. The first Walpole young man to go across to fight for our Country, came from this church.

Miss Harriett E. Willis served as deaconess from 1918-1919. This was a first for our church as possibly for our denomination. Another first was back in 1895-97 when Rev. Elijah H. Roper was minister. His wife was also an ordained minister. The Rev. Roper was not well and his good wife often preached in our pulpit, and very acceptably, as one member puts it.

In 1923 the Rev. James A. Lytle became our minister. His wife Bertha Reed Lytle took charge of the music. She was an accomplished musician and choir director. She organized an orchestra and became president of the ladies group, the Ladies Aid and Missionary Union which merged into the Woman's Church Aid. Her sudden death on January 30, 1925 at the age of 54, was a great blow to our church. However Rev. Lytle carried on doing excellent work in the parish. Mr. Lytle strove for three things for our 50th anniversary. They were a parsonage, an enlarged church and a pipe-organ. At first it seemed impossible, but obstacles never stood in Rev. Lytle's way. Mrs. Margery Bird offered to build a chancel ~~in~~ onto the church as a memorial to her husband, Francis W. Bird. The church voted to accept her generous offer. A fund was started for a new parsonage and also for a pipe-organ, ~~Both~~ all three projects were completed.

After building the chancel Mrs. Bird saw that the rest of the church should be brought into keeping with the chancel. So the whole church was re-nawed, new pews of the colonial type, new colonial light fixtures and chandeliers, inside blinds at the windows, pews put in the balcony, a new kitchen in the basement, etc. The chancel is beautiful with its black and white Belgian marble tiled floor. On December 11, 1927 the new renovated church was re-dedicated.

The chancel is described thus: "The Chancel is of rare beauty. The steps leading up to it are white marble and the floor of alternate squares of white and black and gold Belgian marble." The altar is of rich mahogany with a mahogany Chippendale chair at each end. The dorsal cloth is of a rich red tapestry matching the cushions in the pews. The lectern Bible-rest is an eagle carved out of a block of mahogany, resting on a pillar. The two long mahogany pews at the right of the Chancel is for the choir. There were many gifts and memorials given at the time of the dedication.

In 1954-55 the church was again enlarged. This time Sunday School class room and a large hall (Herbert Harrison Hall) were added, and dedicated. The latest addition is the beautiful Chapel, given by Mr. & Mrs. Axel H. Anderson. This church is one of the most beautiful for its size in the country.

During these 100 years our church built one parsonage in 1911, bought another to replace it in 1924 and our new parsonage was bought in 1962/

~~On 4/4/76~~ During these 100 years many memorials have been placed in the church, in loving memory of some of those who worshipped here, and helped to build that Christian life of the church. The first of these memorials of which we have any record, is our Communion Service which we use every communion Sunday. This was given in loving memory of Mrs. Cynthia Fulton, by her daughter Mrs. Clara Morse.

Two of our ministers had spent part of their early years in the missionary field. They were the Rev. Francis D. George minister here from 1909-1912. He had spent some years as a missionary in India, soon after he left Seminary. The other minister was Rev. Benjamin F. Perkins (1897-1901) who had labored in the missionary field our West, in his early days after leaving Andover-~~Academy~~ Academy.

Between 1944-45 one hundred and nine young men and women entered the service of their Country in World War II. Six young men made the supreme sacrifice. Two young men lost their lives in the Korean Conflict, from this Church.

In 1950 our Church hired a house and cared for 100 persons of DP families. The house was furnished with all the necessities for house keeping. As soon as one family moved out to take his own place in the world, another family moved in. Our Church received a certificate signed by all these DP families in appreciation for our humanitarianism in caring for these homeless people, and welcoming them to a new life in the free world.

Our Church reaches out further in sending money and clothing and food to those in need. Tons of clothing are sent from our Church periodically.

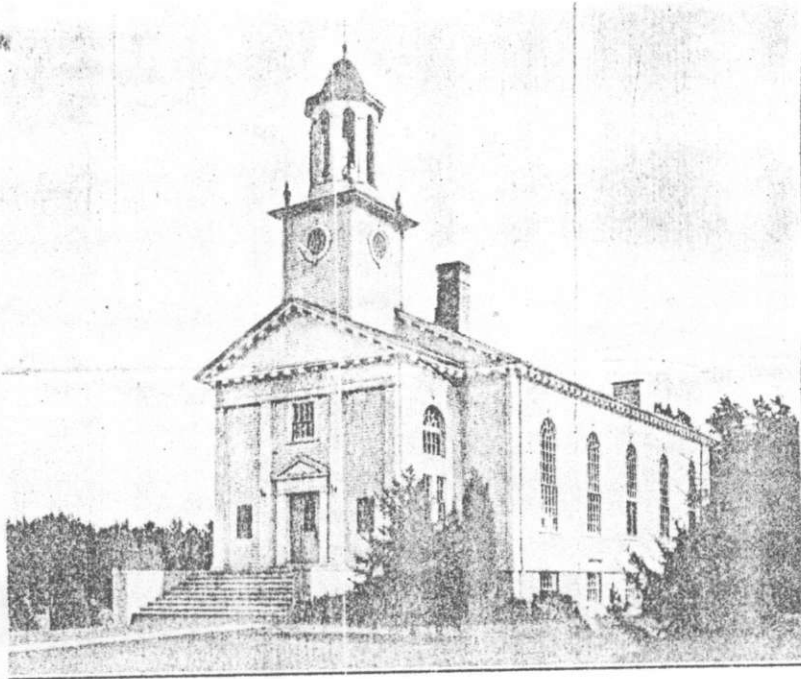
Five young men from our Church have entered the ministry and have churches of their own.

On May 2, 1976 Sunday the Church started a year-long celebration of its 100th Anniversary.

The Rev. Robert P. Noble, Jr., is our present minister. He came to us in 1970. As a leader, minister and friend he is loved and respected by the whole congregation, and his wife is held in high esteem. May they remain with us for a long time.

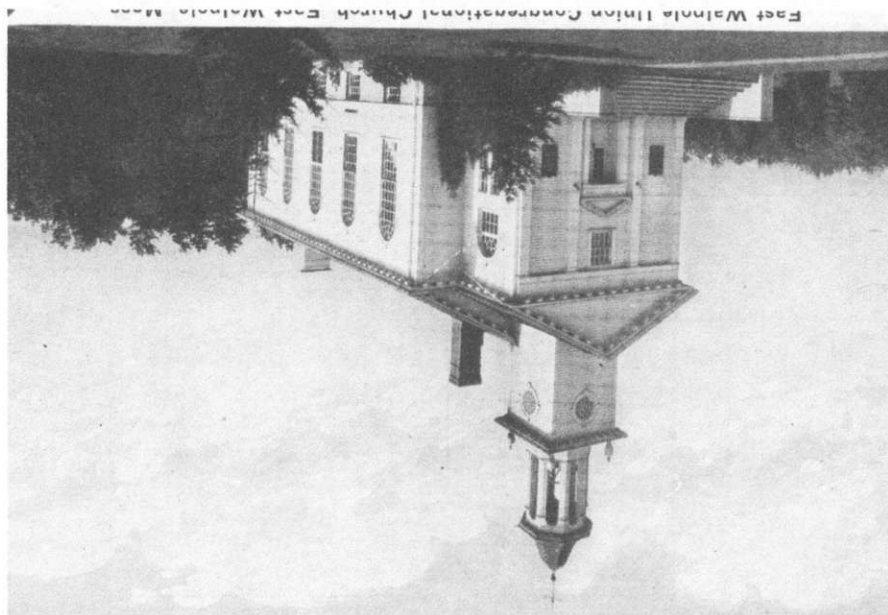
~~At the Annual Meeting of the Church, held on January 22, 1976 two ladies dedicated workers in the church, were honored by being elected Deaconesses Emeriti. So far They are Mrs.~~

Frank R. Larabee
May 9, 1977



EAST WALPOLE UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH





East Walpole Union Congregational Church East Walpole, Mass.

History of the Union Congl. Church
of East Walpole

A Year of Celebration--

On Sunday May 2, 1976 the Church began a year of celebration in honor of its 100th anniversary of its founding. Taking part in the service besides our pastor, the Rev. Robert P. Noble, Jr., were Rev. Clarence Fuller, senior pastor of the First Congregational Church in Melrose, The Rev. Frank Vietze, pastor of the Bethany Congregational Church in Bridgeport, Conn., and Rev. Jeffrey Johnson, associate minister of the First Baptist Church in Malden. All of these young ministers received their early Bible instruction in our Church. The Rev. Jeffrey Johnson was ordained in our church ~~in~~ in 1975. Rev. Clarence Fuller preached the sermon, while Rev. Frank Vietze administered the communion. An appropriate hymn, the words of which were written by our pastor, which outlined the origin of this church, in an "upper room" in Morse Tavern building, its present beautiful church beside the park, and asked God's guidance into the future. The words of the anthem sung that day were written for the dedication of our first church in 1883. Three granddaughters of an early minister of this church were our guests of honor. He was the Rev. Benjamin Franklin Perkins, pastor here from 1897 -1901. The East Walpole Library, our old church building, was open in the afternoon for inspection by the congregation and guests. Following the service was a banquet in Herbert Harrison Hall, ~~at~~ the Parish Hall. The Women's Church Aid, brought in a large birthday-cake with one candle on it. Miss Mildred A. Perkins, one of our honored guests was asked to blow out the candle and cut the first piece of the cake. After the dinner, the congregation viewed the display of historic documents and pictures relating to the history of the church, including the historic original Silver Baptismal Font, the pulpit lamp, ancient clock, and collection boxes.

sketches of
A special cover for our Sunday Church programs, showing the original church and our present church, both drawn by our church member Geraine Kirk. As part of the recognition of our 100th anniversary, a new and up-to-date history of our church and celebration is being compiled.

On May 23, 1976 a "Hawaiian Night" was held, with a supper of Hawaiian food, and an illustrated talk on Hawaii by our assistant minister Rev. Nathan Harada, a native of Hawaii. ~~During the evening.~~ The tables at this feast were decorated with flowers and palm leaves shipped in from Hawaii for this occasion. After ~~the feast~~ being coached by Rev. Harada in his native tongue the congregation stood and sang that favorite old hymn "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" in Hawaiian.

A parish supper of Lobster and roast-beef was ^{given} held in the Parish Hall on June 5, and on June 13, Children's Sunday, the children prepared a service focusing on our 100th anniversary. At the Village Fair of June 12th, our Church entered a float in the parade, showing large pictures of our first and present churches. This float was designed the the pictures drawn to scale by James Kil

To help us celebrate and take part in the celebration, three former ministers of the church came back to preach. They were Rev. Richard B. Carleton on June 27, Rev. Lee Sanden, Jr., on October 10th, and Rev. Joan E. Morgan on January 9th.

On July 4th after a special service of celebration, at 2 P.M. our church bell joined all the other church bells throughout the vast nation to ring in our nation's 200th birthday.

During the summer our seminarian Patti Welch, Al Boonstra, one of our laymen and Wayne Hanson, who is studying for ordination in the Episcopal church, all conducted services.

A Year of Celebration--

On July 11th the guest preacher was the Rev. Lee Weiston, pastor emeritus of Original Congregational Church of Wrentham. Mr. Weiston is the author of three books on the Gospel of Mark.

On Sept. 12th an adult Bible Class was formed, and on the 18 was the annual Church Fair.

Holland Night was on Oct. 3. A supper of Dutch feed was prepared for the parish after which an illustrated ~~xxx/~~lecture was presented by Mr. Al Beenstra on his native Holland, the beautiful land of canals ~~xxx/~~windmills and tulips. Holland was the haven for the early Pilgrims before coming to America.

On October 17th, a special service of worship focusing on the American Indian Ministries, led by Mrs. Phyllis Baldwin, who is connected with the American Indian affairs of the United Church of Christ. She told of her work among the Indians and especially of the Indian school at Bismark, North Dakota. This talk was ^{very} ~~special/~~ ~~xxx/~~ of interest to us as our Church had sent ~~xxx/~~ shortly before, a gift of \$1200.00 to this school in memory of Mrs. Phyllis Johnson, mother of Rev. Jeffrey Johnson. It was her dying wish that a sum of money be sent to an Indian school in her memory.

During this anniversary year our church organist selected ^{special} music from early American composers for the organ and choir. On Dec. 12th the Madrigal Singers of the Walpole High School sang during the service, and on Jan. 9th when Rev. Mr. Morgan was here, Donald Adams and his wife Elsie were guest soloists. On Feb. 20th the Baystatesmen sang several hymns during the service, and on March 27th the choir sang the Motet "Gallia" by Gounod.

On Feb. 13th ^{Serenade} ~~"Stardust Serenade"~~ the 6th annual charity ball was given in the parish hall. This is put on ~~by~~ the young people of the church.

On April 9th Miss Betsy Seize, a Walpole High School Senior gave a piano recital.

May 1, 1977 Sunday, was the closing day of our year long celebration. During this service the "Deacon's Pew" in the chancel was dedicated in memory of Deacon William W. Rhodes, our first deacon who held office from 1877 till his death in 1890. His great-grandson Kenneth Pierce is a member of our Church. The second ~~dedication~~ was of the original old silver Baptismal Font which was dedicated in memory of our first minister, the Rev. Charles B. Smith (1877-1891). After the service a parish dinner was served by Don and Regi Brennan, our famous chefs. After which the people had a chance to see a large collection of historic items, documents and pictures relating to our Church's 100 years of service to the community.

Besides the many charities the Women's Church Aid give to, the Church sent \$5,000.00 as their gift to the 17/76 Fund to aid Negro colleges throughout the nation. These were not special gifts because of the anniversary, but happened during the anniversary year.

Frank R. Lorrabee May 10, 1977



Congregational Church, East Walpole, Mass.

Built in 1883 - later the Wednesday Club
presently E.W. Branch Library

90th Anniversary

Sunday, April 30, has been designated Anniversary Sunday for the Union Congregational Church, the congregation of the United Church of Christ, the church building of which is located on Rhoades avenue in East Walpole.

Union Church was established May 5, 1877, by a group of persons from several denominational backgrounds. The struggling congregation was greatly dependent upon the support of the Missionary Society of Boston. As the congregation increased, a "chapel" was constructed on the corner of Union street and Wolcott avenue. This building currently serves as quarters for the East Walpole branch of the Walpole Library.

The present church building was dedicated April 18, 1915: on that date the first church bell to ring in East Walpole was heard. In 1927 the nave was remodeled and the beautiful chancel was designed and constructed. On October 31, 1954, the parish house, including the large fellowship hall, the reception room, the chapel, and additional Church School rooms, was completed.



GUEST PREACHER at the Union Congregational Church will be Rev. Dr. Myron W. Fowell, secretary, Mass. Conference of the United Church of Christ. Dr. Fowell, the author of a variety of pamphlets and papers in the area of social ethics, will preach on "The Church That Is In Thy

The most recent capital investment for the church edifice is a completely automatic fire alarm system which significantly increases the scope of protection of property and life.

The Congregation voted, Jan. 26, 1961, to affiliate with merger of the Evangelical and Reformed and the Congregational Christian Churches into the United Church of Christ.

The church today is essentially a "community" church although its heritage is Congregational Christian and it maintains an active and responsible relationship with the United Church of Christ. Among its more than 500 active-resident members are persons from almost every Christian denomination. Though a nucleus of the congregation are residents of East Walpole, many families from other sections of Walpole, South Norwood, Norwood, Westwood, Wrentham, Canton, etc., are communicants.

Currently the congregation's mission has been experiencing a steady, if unspectacular, increase in scope and influence. During the past four years there has been a significant increase in stewardship with a dramatic increase in giving to the wider mission of the Church. Approximately 25 percent of all giving currently goes to benevolences and Christian World Mission beyond the local parish. The active Church School is formulating plans for weekday classes for the older children and youth. Attendance at the Family Service has averaged a 33 percent increase over the past four years. Auxiliary organizations include a popular and active program for the Jr. and Sr. Pilgrim Fellowships; an active Men's Club, and the Women's Church Aid.

The guest preacher for the Family Service, April 30, will be the Rev. Dr. Myron W. Fowell, Sec. for Christian Social Action, Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Fowell is substituting for the Rev. Dr. Albert Penner, President of the Conference, who had to cancel his visit with the congregation for reasons of a limited schedule due to illness. The sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated, with the Pastor, Rev. Leo Sandon, Jr., the celebrant. An anthem by the combined Junior, Intermediate, and Chancel choirs will be offered.

Thou Gracious Power

ff *fff* *P*

Thou gra-cious Power whose mercy binds the lips of home. The smile of peace on

fam-ly in this an

fam-ly in-

mf *(organ)*

fold as Thou didst keep Thy folk of gold For all thy blessings life here

for all thy blessings life here

ff *ff* *PP*

brought for all thy mercy how have brought For all we mourn, for all we keep, The



music written by organist at East Walpole Church who later became organist at the United Church

Thou Gracious Power

Hand we cleave the loved that sleep,
 non-tide summer of the
 The world summer of the
 For - - - ing

The star that guided our darkening years - The true light rays from his - in sphere (gospel)

We thank thee Fa - ther! Let Thy grace our
 lov - ing air - de still en - brace Thy

Thou Gracious Power

Handwritten musical notation for the first system of the anthem. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a brace on the left. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

mer-cy shed it - kindly love, Thy Power be with us ev-er more, Thy Power be

Handwritten musical notation for the second system of the anthem. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a brace on the left. The melody continues in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

with us ev-er more.

This Anthem, written for the Choir in our Church (Union Congregational Church of East Walpole, Mass.) was first sung in our Church on Thanks-giving Sunday, November 20, 1938. --this copy was made by one of the Choir members.

